

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Council of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo held in the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Friday, March 27, 2020, commencing at 7:00 PM.

Present:

Don Scott, Mayor
Mike Allen, Councillor (via teleconference)
Krista Balsom, Councillor
Bruce Inglis, Councillor (via teleconference)
Sheila Lalonde, Councillor (via teleconference)
Keith McGrath, Councillor (via teleconference)
Phil Meagher, Councillor (via teleconference)
Verna Murphy, Councillor (via teleconference)
Jeff Peddle, Councillor (via teleconference)
Jane Stroud, Councillor (via teleconference)
Claris Voyageur, Councillor (via teleconference)

Administration:

Jamie Doyle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Matthew Hough, Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer
Deanne Bergey, Director, Community Services (via teleconference)
Scott Davis, Director, Emergency Management (via teleconference)
Matthew Harrison, Acting Director, Communications, Stakeholder, Indigenous and Rural Relations (via teleconference)
Brad McMurdo, Director, Planning and Development (via teleconference)
Linda Ollivier, Director, Financial Services (via teleconference)
Keith Smith, Director, Public Works (via teleconference)
Kurt Stillwell, Municipal Legal Counsel
Darlene Soucy, Legislative Officer

1. Call to Order

Mayor D. Scott called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Presentation

2.1. Information Briefing – Scott Davis, Director of Emergency Management (Verbal)

Scott Davis, Director of Emergency Management, provided a briefing on the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's preparedness and response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and noted that the Municipality continues to take steps to ensure the safety and well-being of residents including closing all parks.

Exit and Return

Councillor K. Balsom exited the meeting at 7:31 p.m. and returned at 7:33 p.m.

3. Councillors' Motions

3.1. COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Vacating the Chair

Mayor D. Scott vacated the Chair at 7:48 p.m., at which time Deputy Mayor Balsom assumed the Chair.

Mayor D. Scott put forward the following motion for consideration:

“THAT Council advise and direct the Director of Emergency Management (DEM) and the Interim Chief Administrative Officer (Interim CAO):

1. THAT we immediately develop a shelter in place guideline limiting residents to staying in their homes unless accessing essential services; That we direct residents to shelter in place until further notice; That Administration communicate what shelter in place entails as determined by the Interim CAO and DEM;
2. THAT only essential services should remain open in the region as determined by the Interim CAO and DEM with the exception of any service that can be provided through electronic means;
3. THAT Administration work with industry to ensure only essential employees are residing in camps and that all camps are strictly adhering to Alberta Health Services (AHS) guidelines;
4. THAT we task Administration with continuing obtaining critical supplies including protective equipment including N95 masks for the anticipated duration of the emergency;
5. THAT we ask AHS to immediately publicly disclose the number of COVID positive cases in Wood Buffalo and how many are individuals who resided in work camps;

6. THAT we direct all essential businesses that remain open that they must comply with AHS guidelines;
7. THAT we aggressively communicate the Vulnerable Person Registry in the region and ensure it is updated to ensure those requiring assistance receive it;
8. THAT we use all possible enforcement powers available to protect the community when appropriate and impose such sanctions as are within our jurisdiction for non-compliance;
9. THAT we set up regular calls with our rural and indigenous communities to determine what is needed on a go forward basis to address the pandemic;
10. THAT we encourage the residents of Wood Buffalo to stay connected through technology and identify individuals who are alone, in distress or may need assistance;
11. THAT Administration come forward with a recommendation specific to deferring residential property taxes;
12. THAT we encourage the provincial government to look at measures that will assist both commercial renters and residential renters;
13. THAT residential utility bills for residents be deferred until the emergency ends;
14. THAT we request the federal and provincial governments to set up an aggressive and robust program to support businesses;
15. THAT we communicate that anyone visiting the urban service area, or a rural community must self isolate for 14 days, whether they arrive by road or air;
16. THAT we reduce transit services and waive fees for transit until further notice with such exceptions as the Interim CAO and DEM determine necessary;
17. THAT the Interim CAO and the DEM address those matters raised by the leadership of the indigenous and rural communities to address the pandemic in an expeditious manner.”

Mayor D. Scott noted that several parts of his motion had been addressed by measures implemented by the Provincial Government; therefore, with consent of Council, Mayor D. Scott withdrew sections 2, 3, 4, 5, and 13.

Mayor D. Scott noted that, at the request of Councillor V. Murphy, the remaining sections of the motion would be severed so each section could be voted on separately.

Delegates

Jeffrey O'Donnell and Valerie Quintal, Conklin Resource Development Advisory Committee, spoke in support of the spirit of the motion, and suggested that access to Conklin should be limited to community members and essential services as a proactive measure to protect the residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Jay Telegdi, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN), spoke in support of the proposed motion, noting that the ACFN does not have a reserve in Fort Chipewyan so they are looking to the Municipality to implement measures such as closing the winter road, implementing a curfew for residents under the age of 18 unless accompanied by an adult, and limiting access to the community to ensure the well-being of ACFN members and other residents of the community.

Point of Order

Councillor V. Murphy called a Point of Order, noting that the comments made by the delegate were unrelated to the proposed motion. Deputy Mayor K. Balsom overruled the Point of Order and noted that the information being provided was relevant to section 17 of the proposed motion.

Ron Pelletier, resident, spoke in opposition to sections 1 and 15 of the proposed motion, noting that most residents are following Alberta Health Services social distancing guidelines and that it would be difficult to enforce “shelter in place” given the geographic size of the Municipality. Mr. Pelletier also posed concerns with respect to section 15.

Exit

Councillor C. Voyageur disconnected from the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Pastor Doug Doyle, Wood Buffalo Christian Ministerial Association, spoke in support of the majority of the proposed motion but suggested that caution should be used before issuing a shelter in place order as this may limit the ability of churches to serve their members effectively, which they are currently able to do under the social distancing measures that are in place.

Dr. Rudy Sookbirsingh, resident, spoke in support of the proposed motion and indicated that extreme measures are required to protect the residents and to provide the vulnerable members of the Municipality with appropriate support.

Return

Councillor C. Voyageur reconnected to the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

Nick Sanders, Interim Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of the sections of the proposed motion that would provide assistance to businesses in the Region such as commercial rental assistance and noted that any tax deferrals and reductions for residents should also include businesses.

Exit and Return

Councillor P. Meagher disconnected from the meeting at 9:23 p.m. and reconnected at 9:24 p.m.

Kelly Koban, resident and small business owner, spoke to sections 1 and 15 of the proposed motion, and indicated that these measures should not be enacted without an enforcement or tracking mechanism.

Exit and Return

Mayor D. Scott exited the meeting at 9:31 p.m. and returned at 9:33 p.m.

Recess

A recess occurred from 9:41 p.m. to 9:48 p.m.

Brian Matthys, resident, spoke in support of section 1 of the motion as proposed without any amendments, and noted that some residents are not following AHS social distancing measures.

Chantel Beaver, Executive Director, FuseSocial, spoke to amending section 14 of the proposed motion to include the social profit sector and noted that this sector has not been included in recent funding announcements from the Federal and Provincial governments.

Rene Wells, resident, spoke in opposition to Section 1 of the proposed motion, and indicated that a shelter in place order at this time would impose excessive restrictions on those residents who have complied with AHS social distancing requirements, and that caution needs to be exercised to ensure essential services, including those that support industry, remain open.

Colleen Tatum, resident, spoke in support of the sections of the motion specific to measures that would assist businesses but noted that more needs to be done, including the deferral of taxes for small to medium businesses.

Linda McKenna, resident and business owner, spoke in opposition to the proposed motion and noted that the AHS COVID-19 pandemic guidelines were developed by public health professionals.

Recesses

A recess occurred from 10:27 p.m. to 10:35 p.m.

As the electronic meeting platform disconnected during the recess, a recess occurred from 10:36 p.m. to 10:41 p.m. to restart the electronic meeting and to allow participants to reconnect, at which time Councillor C. Voyageur was not reconnected to the meeting.

Exit and Returns

Councillor S. Lalonde disconnected from the meeting at 10:42 p.m. and reconnected at 10:43 p.m.

Councillor C. Voyageur reconnected to the meeting at 10:43 p.m.

Mayor D. Scott put forward the following motion for consideration:

“THAT we immediately develop a shelter in place guideline limiting residents to staying in their homes unless accessing essential services; That we direct residents to shelter in place until further notice; That Administration communicate what shelter in place entails as determined by the DCAO and DEM.”

Councillor M. Allen proposed the following friendly amendment, which was accepted by Mayor D. Scott and Council:

THAT recommendation #1 be deleted and replaced with the following:

THAT we develop “stay at home” guidelines that can be communicated to residents of the region and that such guidelines include freedom of enjoyment of outside activities that are respectful of physical distancing requirements; and

THAT we request residents voluntarily adhere to these guidelines as well as all mandatory Government of Alberta requirements until such time that the “Stay at Home” guidelines may become mandatory through vote of Council.

Points of Order

Councillor P. Meagher called a Point of Order, noting that Councillor S. Lalonde was debating the recommendation regarding shelter in place, which is now a recommendation regarding stay at home guidelines. Deputy Mayor K. Balsom upheld the Point of Order and requested that Councillor S. Lalonde keep debate to the recommendation before Council.

Councillor B. Inglis called a Point of Order, noting that the language used by Councillor V. Murphy during debate was uncalled for. Councillor V. Murphy apologized for the record.

Councillor P. Meagher called a Point of Order, noting that Mayor D. Scott was not confining his remarks to the motion being debated. Deputy Mayor K. Balsom upheld the Point of Order and requested that Mayor D. Scott keep comments and debate to the recommendation before Council.

Voting then occurred on the amended motion.

MOTION – SECTION 1:

THAT we develop “stay at home” guidelines that can be communicated to residents of the region and that such guidelines include freedom of enjoyment of outside activities that are respectful of physical distancing requirements; and

THAT we request residents voluntarily adhere to these guidelines as well as all mandatory Government of Alberta requirements until such time that the “Stay at Home” guidelines may become mandatory through vote of Council.

RESULT:	DEFEATED [5 TO 6]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Stroud
AGAINST:	Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Voyageur

MOTION – SECTION 6:

THAT we direct all essential businesses that remain open that they must comply with AHS guidelines.

RESULT:	CARRIED [7 TO 4]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, McGrath, Meagher, Stroud
AGAINST:	Lalonde, Murphy, Peddle, Voyageur

MOTION – SECTION 7:

THAT we aggressively communicate the Vulnerable Person Registry in the region and ensure it is updated to ensure those requiring assistance receive it.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

With consent of Council, Mayor D. Scott withdrew Section 8 of the proposed motion.

Mayor D. Scott put forward the following motion for consideration:

“THAT we set up regular calls with our rural and indigenous communities to determine what is needed on a go forward basis to address the pandemic.”

Councillor J. Stroud proposed a friendly amendment to add “including elected leadership to leadership in such calls”, which was accepted by Mayor D. Scott and Council.

Exit and Return

Mayor D. Scott exited the meeting at 12:09 a.m. and returned at 12:10 a.m.

Voting then occurred on the amended motion.

MOTION SECTION 9:

THAT we set up regular calls with our rural and indigenous communities, including elected leadership to leadership in such calls, to determine what is needed on a go forward basis to address the pandemic.

RESULT:	CARRIED [10 TO 1]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur
AGAINST:	Lalonde

Exit, Recess and Return

Councillor C. Voyageur disconnected from the meeting and a recess occurred from 12:27 a.m. to 12:35 a.m., during which time Councillor Voyageur reconnected to the meeting.

MOTION – SECTION 10:

THAT we encourage the residents of Wood Buffalo to stay connected through technology and identify individuals who are alone, in distress or may need assistance.

RESULT:	CARRIED [8 TO 3]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, McGrath, Meagher, Peddle, Stroud
AGAINST:	Lalonde, Murphy, Voyageur

Mayor D. Scott put forward the following motion for consideration:

“THAT Administration come forward with a recommendation specific to deferring residential property taxes.”

Councillor J. Stroud proposed a friendly amendment to add “as well as for medium and small businesses”, which was accepted by Mayor D. Scott and Council.

Councillor K. McGrath proposed a friendly amendment to add “and the rural non-residential tax class”.

Point of Order

Councillor V. Murphy called a Point of Order, noting that Councillor K. McGrath's proposed friendly amendment is substantive and changes the intent of the motion. Deputy Mayor K. Balsom upheld the Point of Order, noting that the proposed friendly amendment could not be accepted.

Voting then occurred on the amended motion.

MOTION – SECTION 11:

THAT Administration come forward with a recommendation specific to deferring residential property taxes as well as for medium and small businesses.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

Mayor D. Scott put forward the following motion for consideration:

“THAT we encourage the provincial government to look at measures that will assist both commercial renters and residential renters.”

Councillor V. Murphy proposed a friendly amendment to remove “residential renters”, which was accepted by Mayor D. Scott and Council.

Voting then occurred on the amended motion.

MOTION – SECTION 12:

THAT we encourage the provincial government to look at measures that will assist commercial renters.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

Mayor D. Scott put forward the following motion for consideration:

“THAT we request the federal and provincial governments to set up an aggressive and robust program to support businesses.”

Councillor V. Murphy proposed a friendly amendment to add “and social profits, including not-for-profits and charities”, which was accepted by Mayor D. Scott and Council.

Voting then occurred on the amended motion.

MOTION – SECTION 14:

THAT we request the federal and provincial governments to set up an aggressive and robust program to support businesses and social profits, including not-for-profits and charities.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

With consent of Council, Mayor D. Scott withdrew sections 15 and 16 of the proposed motion.

MOTION – SECTION 17:

THAT the Interim CAO and the DEM address those matters raised by the leadership of the indigenous and rural communities to address the pandemic in an expeditious manner.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Don Scott, Mayor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

Resuming of Chair

Mayor D. Scott resumed the Chair at 1:02 a.m.

3.2. Tax Incentives for Businesses in the Rural Service Area

MOTION:

THAT Item # 3.2 - Tax Incentives for Businesses in the Rural Service Area be deferred to the April 14, 2020 Council Meeting.

RESULT: CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Jane Stroud, Councillor
SECONDER: Bruce Inglis, Councillor
FOR: Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

MOTION:

THAT Council close agenda item 4.1 to the public pursuant to sections 17(1) and 24(1) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

RESULT: CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Krista Balsom, Councillor
SECONDER: Mike Allen, Councillor
FOR: Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Peddle, Stroud, Voyageur

Recess and Exit

A recess occurred between 1:07 a.m. and 1:15 a.m., at which time the meeting was reconvened in-camera in the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse Boardroom via teleconference, and at which time Councillor J. Peddle was disconnected from the meeting and did not reconnect.

Exits

Jamie Doyle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, and Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer, exited the meeting at 1:17 a.m.

4. In-Camera Session

4.1 Disclosure Harmful to Personal Privacy / Advice from Officials / - Personnel / Labour Matter

Name	Reason for Attending
Kari Westhaver	Director, Human Resources

MOTION:

That the meeting reconvene in public.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Krista Balsom, Councillor
SECONDER:	Verna Murphy, Councillor
FOR:	Scott, Allen, Balsom, Inglis, Lalonde, McGrath, Meagher, Murphy, Stroud, Voyageur
ABSENT:	Peddle

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 a.m.

Mayor

Chief Legislative Officer



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

March 26, 2020

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

Pursuant to Sections 194 and 199 of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA. 2000 c.M-26, a Special Council Meeting is hereby scheduled to take place at 7:00 p.m. on the 27th day of March 2020, at the Syncrude Athletic Park Clubhouse, 101 Cartier Road, Fort McMurray, T9H 2L3, to consider the following:

1. Information Briefing – Director of Emergency Management (Verbal Presentation)
2. Councillor's Motion - COVID-19 Pandemic Response
(Motion presented on March 24, 2020, by Mayor D. Scott)
3. Councillor's Motion - Tax Incentives for Businesses in the Rural Service Area
(Motion presented on March 24, 2020, by Councillor J. Stroud)
4. Personnel/Labour Matter
(in camera pursuant to section 17(1) and 24(1) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*)

Don Scott, QC
Mayor
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo